THE

ORDEAL.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

*I say nothing but what I protest intendment of doing....*SHAKSPEARE.

In a place like Boston, which has always been remarkable for a disregard, if not discountenance of periodical works, and at a time when not only all the avenues to the altar of publick favour are filled with importunate candidates, but when the crisis in our publick affairs is so alarming as to threaten the very existence of the nation, it may well be enquired of the editors of the present publication, what result they can expect to their undertaking but failure, and what prospects they can discover but such as are overshadowed with clouds. At least it must be required of them, to state their peculiar pretensions to favour, and their intrinsick claims for support, and to show in what respect their labours are required to overthrow the monsters of political experiment which stamp disgrace upon the present times, and which from their unchecked progress threaten to endanger the happiness of this country to remote posterity.

Though the editors are completely sensible of the difficulties they must be obliged to encounter in their struggle for success, and though it is their lot to have fallen upon times pregnant with corruptions in politicks, religion and literature, but barren alike of patriotism, and munificence; yet, supported by their confidence in the sterling merit of *old fashioned* principles, they do not shrink from their attempt; and even should it prove abortive, they can compromise with misfortune from the impression that they have intended well, and have offered some feeble aid to that glorious opposition which has for its object the attainment of peace without dishonour, government without experiment, and national energy without national disgrace. We wish our po-

litical, religious and literary sentiments to be unequivocally understood, and our intentions openly explained: We think the political errours of the times fatal to the best interests of the community, and that such principles of religion and literature are spreading abroad as are calculated vitally to injure our national establishments. The paramount necessity of securing our civil and political existence should unite all honest men in an ardent effort to exhibit to the view *of the people* the deformities which disgrace the present administration of government, by tearing away the curtain of hypocrisy under which they have long been concealed.

The same imperious impressions relative to our religious establishments, which are daily experiencing the most daring innovations of principles, inculcate the necessity of a like exposure of their absurdities; and the strong connexion which subsists, in all good governments, between politicks, religion, and literature, renders it equally important to detect the fallacy of such literary hypotheses as may have a tendency to subvert our understandings or undermine our principles of action. It is under every aspect necessary to point out the paths of honour, sound principle, and true fame, to the votaries of their country's happiness, and show how the opposite course will conduct to licentiousness in action, corruption in motive, and degradation in renown.

The general avowal of their wishes having been thus announced, it is incumbent on the editors, to declare the methods by which they expect to realise their hopes and reduce their theory to practice.

The office of the satirist is always an ungrateful, though at the same time it is a necessary one. Eminence of station is not, nor should it be, exempt from attack. In the discussion of publick affairs, the vices of an administration may oftentimes be magnified when viewed through the convex medium of party opposition; but this extension of truth, if it encroach not too far upon falsehood, is authorised by the latitude of discussion which the interests of society require. Every principle of publick concern, is open to publick investigation and satirick assault. The pulpit, the senate, and the closet of the scholar, are equally exposed to reprehension. The animadversion of satire reaches to cases beyond the efforts of legal restraint. When

the cognizance of law has no effect, the satirist appeals to the tribunal of publick opinion, and enforces his doctrines with irresistible power. Under the proper limitations which prescribe its progress, if it be neither immoral, seditious, scandalous, nor blasphemous, it may fairly be used to *cleanse the foul body of the infected world*, and become the most effectual engine left, to restore to this country its ancient principles of government, and reform our deadly errours, not only in politicks, but in morals and religion. The time for discrimination is come; the times of pure and unsophisticated reason, of rational and practical philosophy, are past; solid reasonings are never read; and satire must find its way to the consciences of men when other resources are insufficient.

But the satirist himself is often considered in the light of a common enemy, whom it is the interest of society to avoid; his observations are continually distorted from their natural shape, his criticism is denominated abuse and his expostulation enmity. Under these imputations the editors must of necessity be contented. Though their office is dangerous, it is effective. The satirist consults his courage as well as conduct, he is the soldier for hazardous enterprise, is always employed upon *coup de mains*; and though he encounters the greatest dangers of the service, his whole satisfaction must be drawn from the singular effects of his operations and the distresses with which they load the enemy.

The application of satire must be local, to render it beneficial or effective; hence it must rather be employed on *persons* than *topics*; on the palpable exhibition of the vice, than the abstract nature of the crime. While it degenerates not into malignant abuse nor personal invective, but has only the fair prospects of sound literature, religion and politicks in view, it undoubtedly is in the true exercise of its 'legitimate peculiar powers' when it lashes publick men, who are supposed to be subverting the interests and endangering the safety of their country. Satire therefore will be one of the engines which the editors of this publication will employ to further their general design; but in what shape that satire will be exercised, whether in drawing allegorical or real characters, or whether in poetry or prose, it is now useless to determine, as its complexion will be changed according to the variation of circumstances.

These observations, however, in favour of satire, are by no means intended to imply an exclusion of articles of serious discussion or general information. The editors however, determine, if possible, that every thing which their paper is to contain, shall have a direct or implied local application; since they are thoroughly convinced that a work conducted on any other principles, however meritorious its execution might be, would comparatively, have but an ineffectual influence on the manners and opinions of men. But the influence of grave discussions, after all, is nugatory. The object of political investigation in the United States, is rather to inform the people than to check the government; here a change in the popular sentiment removes the administration; in England an administration is removed at the instigation of particular interests, of family connexions, or the royal will. There political remarks may contain more gravity of reason, and will have a certain effect; but here discussion must entertain as well as instruct; the multitude must be conducted to the point by the torch of fancy and not by the clue of logical investigation.

Events of great importance will be related as they transpire in the world; but unless they see the necessity of changing their plan, the editors will not undertake to render their paper a medium of early intelligence. The most important subjects of publick concern will be investigated with liveliness, and they are confident to hope, without any perversion of truth. In their particular introductions to the several departments of this publication, the editors intend to unfold distinctly their tenets of belief and intentions which each branch is designed to promote. They here, therefore, only think it necessary to mention the terms and typographical plan according to which the paper is to be executed.

CONDITIONS.

I. It is intended that the ORDEAL shall be published every Saturday evening, each number containing 16 octavo pages, on type and paper similar to this specimen, and be occasionally decorated with plates.

II. Twenty-six numbers will form a volume, the price of which to subscribers will be *Two Dollars*. Single numbers 10 Cents.

III. It will be delivered to subscribers in Boston and the vicinity on the day of publication, and to those at a distance by the earliest conveyance. ☞ None will be considered as subscribers but such as pay for one volume at the time of subcribing; and it will be sent to no persons living out of Boston, after his term of subscription has expired. *That we may never disturb the good nature of our friends with a call for payment, nor experience the mortification of a refusal ourselves, the above article will be dispensed with in no case whatever.*

IV. With the last number of each volume will be given a title page and index.

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICKS.

I would wish to act with those statesmen who would as far as is consistent with the dignity and safety of the country, by a timely concession and a rational departure from too rigid principles, prevent those calamities which result from authority without power, and expense without supplies. *Pur. Lit.*

A CAREFUL review of the several administrations of the Federal Government since the adoption of the constitution, would be much more likely to lead to a judicious estimate among honest men of the compartive merits and peculiar policy of each, than any other conceivable method, on the authority of which an opinion could be formed. The federal administrations under Washington and Adams pursued a course of policy evidently contrary to the path which Mr. Jefferson and his party have followed; and in order to bring the merits of their respective systems to the test, it will only be necessary to mention the particular principles of both as contrasted with each other, and the effects which the promulgation of their doctrines have had, not only upon foreign nations, but our own domestick happiness.

The first very important difference of opinion which arose among the citizens of the United States after Washington accepted the office of President, resulted from the French revolution. Although that was an event, which began with the most atrocious crimes and continued cruel and bloody to its termination in the present military despotism of Napoleon, and although it is now universally censured by all well disposed partizans in this country, yet it is an undoubted fact that the predominant party which now presides over the destinies of America first

originated in the disgraceful enthusiasm created by French licentiousness. They were so rapt in admiration at the conflagration of consuming despotism, that they could not discern the tumult which threatened the destruction of those who first kindled the flame. The influence of French principles which was early extended over every country in Europe, soon became evident in this; when shall we forget the machinations of French agents in fomenting rebellion, and the clamours of faction for a war with Great-Britain? At this crisis the proclamation of neutrality by Washington arrested the dangers which threatened us, by opposing to them the effectual rampart of his personal responsibility. Let those persons who were so loud in their resentments on that occasion, reflect on what our probable situation at this time would have been had their policy been pursued, by considering our present situation, under the adoption of measures of similar tendency, when we are so much better able to sustain the distress which follows them.

The discussions relative to the treaty with Great Britain, negotiated by Mr. Jay, formed the next most important distinction between the Federalists and Democrats. How fairly their opposition to the administration on that subject was pursued, how justly their charges of treachery were founded, and how solid were their objections to the instrument itself, may be tested by the impossibility of their obtaining so good a one themselves, even under the Fox administration; the panegyricks on Mr. Jay's integrity and personal influence, pronounced by Lord Grenville in the House of Commons; and by their mean crimination of Mr. Munroe's negotiation, to hide their own disgrace.

The establishment of a navy was a favourite scheme of the late president Mr. Adams, and the violent opposition with which the present party assailed it, creates another striking difference in the opinions of the respective parties. The respect which was paid us abroad wherever our national flag was unfurled, the character of our President, and the practicability of all his measures, form a contrast to the present state of our national character and the personal influence of Mr. Jefferson, as gratifying to our feelings as partizans as it is overwhelming to our hopes as citizens. During the administration of the present government, from its systematick opposition to its predecessors, we have seen an obstinate perseverance in a trial of experiments in politicks, which none but the blindest theorists could presume would terminate in a fortunate result. We have seen a navy annihilated, philosophy displace experience, impracticable measures proposed and adopted, and though evidently inefficacious, most pertinaciously adhered to, and tyranically enforced. In short, the same tendency which attracted the Jacobins of 1798, to republican France, are in full operation in 1809, towards the despotick governour of the same nation. And the

same enmity which dictated a war with Great Britain in the early period of our national existence, now threatens to annihilate that existence in the pursuit of a policy not only absurd in theory, but in practice advantageous to our enemy and ruinous to ourselves. The various points of distinction which mark the federal and democratick administrations, would swell this paper to a greater bulk, than we can now suffer it to attain. We have not forgotten the judiciary, the impressment of seamen, the rule of 1756, the purchase of Louisiana, nor the influence of Virginia. But as those topicks will early call our attention, and as this address is principally to announce our political creed, we shall not discuss them at the present moment. The difference, however, which distinguishes one administration from the other is mainly this, the federal was a practical and the democratick is a theoretick system of policy. Under the benign influence of the first we were a prosperous and a happy people; our commerce flourished, our industry was successful, our character was respected, and our rights maintained; under the pestiferous shade of theory and dignified retirement, negotiation has been so long protracted by ridiculous impediments, that commerce is destroyed, industry is inert and insensible, the national character is disgraced, and under the pretence of maintaining secondary rights, our very existence seems fast approaching to its decisive termination.

To oppose such doctrines will be a principal object in this paper; we call therefore on the satirists of the times to lend us their torches to light the wretches, which disgrace our national annals, to the verge of everlasting night; and their thongs to whip them into the infamy they merit.

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY.

This department, in every literary journal in the United States, has always been meagre of original stamina or support, particularly as respects satirical effusions. And as we shall have in view, the censure of the ridicuious, as well as the approbation of the dignified, we shall frequently have recourse to foreign store-houses for weapons to overthrow the adversaries of good sense. We therefore offer our readers an account of a German drama, of some celebrity; which from the taste in which it is conducted, will give as fair a specimen of our intentions in the Poetical Department, as the most laboured exposition of our own could possibly afford. We call on our poetical friends for similar and congenial attempts, to scourge the absurd taste which prevails in the poetry of the times.

Nathan the Wise, a dramatick poem, is a genuine German drama, written without any imitation of French or English, and admirably calculated to elucidate the native and peculiar taste of that ingenious people. They have borrowed so much of late from both these quarters, that it may reasonably be doubted, whether a relish for their own original and appropriate literature be altogether so common in this country as is usually imagined. This book, we think, will afford a very useful test for determining that important problem, and will enable the reader immediately to ascertain whether he has hitherto admired the true German genius itself, or only its imitation of French and English. A traveller may very erroneously suppose that he relishes German cookery, when he gormandizes on fricandeau or plum-pudding at Vienna; but if he take delight in *sour krout* and *wild-boar venison*, he may rest assured that he is under no mistake as to the proficiency he has made, and that he has completely reconciled himself to the national taste of his entertainers. The work before us is as genuine sour krout as ever perfumed a feast in Westphalia.

The story, in point of absurdity, we think, is fairly entitled to bear away the palm from the celebrated German play in the poetry of the Antijacobin: the moral is no less comfortable; and the diction, though not altogether so lofty, is, upon the whole, entitled to equal admiration.

The scene is laid in Jerusalem in the time of the crusades; and the story turns chiefly upon the adventures of a young Templar, who had been made captive by the armies of the celebrated Saladin. This monarch, who is represented as a pattern of mildness and generosity, chuses to amuse himself one morning by seeing the heads of twenty persons struck off by his chief executioner, and witnesses the operation upon nineteen of them with singular complacency and satisfaction. Being struck, however, with a sort of resemblance which the twentieth seemed to bear to a favourite brother, who had disappeared many years before, he directs his life to be spared, and allows him to roam at large, in a starving condition, through all the streets of Jerusalem. In one of his evening rambles, this youth perceives the house of Nathan the Jew to be on fire; and gallantly going to the assistance of the city firemen, is the means of saving the Jew's daughter from the flames. The young Israelite very naturally falls in love with her preserver; but he, having a bad opinion of the whole nation, keeps out of the way of her gratitude, till Nathan finds him out, and wins the affection of this Christian champion in a moment, by assuring him that he is not a Jew, but only a sort of Deist, who has acquired a habit of going to the synagogue without meaning any thing. The Templar protests that he is himself of the very same faith; and, after vowing eternal friendship, he goes home with him and falls furiously in love with the daughter.

In the mean time, Saladin sends for the Jew to lend him money, and to ask him which of the three religions is the best, the Christian, Jewish, or Mahometan. The learned Rabbi answers, that they are all very good in their way; but that it is impossible to say, till the day of judgment, which is the best: and then gratifying his royal pupil with heaps of gold, he leaves him enchanted with his wisdom and munificence. The Templar, without considering his vow of celibacy, now becomes very urgent to marry the daughter of Nathan; and some accidental obstacles being thrown in the way, it turns out, 1st, that this fair creature is not the Jew's daughter, but the daughter of a Christian Knight, who had confided her to his charge; 2d, that the gallant Templar is the son of the Saracen, prince who had disappeared from Saladin's court, and, wandering into Europe, had been seized with the caprice of becoming a Knight Templar, and fighting against his own beloved brother, under which character he had chosen, however inconsistently, to marry a German lady, and beget this young hero; and, 3d, that the same illustrious convert was also the father of the Jew's reputed daughter, and consequently, that these young lovers stand to each other in the relation of brother and sister. The most edifying part of the story is, that this discovery produces no sort of uneasiness or disturbance to the parties concerned; on the contrary, the young people seem quite delighted with the occurrence; and the author leaves them embracing their uncle the Sultan, in a paroxysm of filial and paternal affection. Such is the fable of Nathan the Wise.

We shall quote a line or two representing the doctrines of the author, which recommend as an antidote to religious intolerance, an absolute indifference or infidelity. When the Templar is reproaching the Jew with the prejudices and superstitions of his nation, he answers,

"*Nath.* ——————— Despise my nation—
We did not chuse a nation for ourselves.
Are we our nations? What's a nation then?
Were Jews and Christians such, ere they were men?
And have I found in thee one more, to whom
It is enough to be a man?
"*Temp.* That hast thou.
Nathan, by God, thou hast. Thy hand; I blush
To have mistaken thee a single instant." p. 104.

This pious Knight makes a still clearer profession of his faith in a dialogue with a Christian woman, in which the poor damsel having happened to say,

"*Daya.* ——————nor were this time
The first, when thro' an unexpected path
The Saviour drew his children on to him
Across the tangled maze of human life.

he answers,

"*Temp.* So solemn that! and yet if in the stead
Of Saviour, I were to say Providence,
It would sound true——" p. 170.

The creed of the Sultan appears, from a variety of passages, to be equally liberal and accommodating.

The diction and composition of this piece are not, as we have already observed, altogether so magnificent or ambitious as those of the modern German theatre. It aims rather at a great simplicity and aptness. The dialogue is the most familiar and natural imaginable, and the metaphors and figures which are introduced the most humble and homely. There is a vein of innocent jocularity which runs through the whole drama; and the Sultan and his ministers gibe and play upon each other, in the very same style of infantine raillery and impatience, which prevails between the young Jewess and her governante. The personages are all very quick and snappish, withal, without ever subjecting themselves to the agitations of the greater passions; and the author has contrived most ingeniously to produce a drama, which has all the levity of comedy, without its wit or vivacity, and all the extravagance of tragedy, without its passion or poetry.

The translator, we think, has done great justice to his original; except that his partiality for the German idiom has induced him to stick to it occasionally, to the manifest prejudice of his English: his notions of metrical harmony are probably borrowed from the same source.

The following is part of the first dialogue that passes between the lovers.

"*Recha.* Where have you been? where you perhaps ought
not—
That is not well.
Temp. Up—how d'ye call the mountain?
Up Sinai.
Recha. Oh that's very fortunate.
Now I shall learn for certain, if 'tis true—
Temp. What! If the spot may yet be seen where Moses
Stood before God; when first—
Recha. No, no; not that.
Where'er he stood, 'twas before God. Of this
I know enough already. Is it true,
I wish to learn from you, that—that it is not
By far so troublesome to climb this mountain
As to get down—for on all mountains else,
That I have seen, quite the reverese obtains." p. 128-29.

The following soliloquy of the wise Nathan, when the Sultan leaves him to ponder on his query about the three religions, is in a loftier style, and is in the best and most sententious manner of the author.

" *Nath.* I came prepar'd with cash—he asks truth. Truth?
As if truth too were cash—a coin disus'd
That goes by weight—indeed 'tis some such thing—
But a new coin, known by the stamp at once,
To be flung down and told upon the counter,
It is not that. Like gold in bags tied up,
So truth lies hoarded in the wise man's head
To be brought out—Which now in this transaction,
Which of us plays the Jew? he asks for truth,
Is truth what he requires, his aim, his end?
That this is but the glue to lime a snare
Ought not to be suspected, 'twere too little,
Yet what is found too little for the great—
In fact, thro' hedge and pale to stalk at once
Into one's field beseems not—friends look round,
Seek for the path, ask leave to pass the gate—
I must be cautious. Yet to damp him back
And be the stubborn Jew is not the thing;
And wholly to throw off the Jew, still less.
For if no Jew he might with right inquire—
Why not a Mussulman?——" p. 145--46.

We suspect our readers have enough now; yet there are many choice phrases and images to be culled. Nathan, reproving pride, says,

" The iron pot would with a silver prong
Be lifted from the fire."

The fair Recha comparing the truth of Christianity to weeds sown in her mind, says,

" Yet I must acknowledge
I feel as if they had *a sour sweet odour*,
That makes me giddy—that half suffocates me."

And her handmaid, observing the agitation of her lover, observes with much elegance,

—— " Something passes in him.
It boils—but it must not boil over. Leave him—

The same personage conceiving Nathan to be somewhat severe in his sarcasms, replies to him with great spirit, by first saying, " *Hit off*," and then exclaiming, " *you are on the bite.*" We suspect, however, that we are indebted to the taste of the translator for the dignity of these two repartees.

There is one other phrase to which he seems particularly partial, and which has a very singular effect on his composition. He can by no chance be prevailed upon to use the verb " *to find*," without coupling it with the particle " *up*;" thus, he says, " We'll find thee up a staff;"—" go find me up the Jew;"—" Will no one find me the

Dervis up;"—"I wish to find him up that may convert her," &c. &c. The phrase occurs at least twenty times; and whether it be borrowed from the idiom of the original, or invented by the translator, must certainly be allowed to possess singular grace and animation.

We have now exhibited enough, we conceive, of this drama, to satisfy the greater part of our readers, that, in spite of some late alarming symptoms, there is good reason for holding, that there is still a considerable difference between the national taste of Germany and of this country. The piece before us, has not only been a favourite acting play for these six and twenty years, but it is considered as one of the best productions of their celebrated Lessing, who is vaunted as the purest and most elegant of their dramatick writers, and has long been the idol of all those who cry down Schiller and Kotzebue as caricaturists. The translation is from the pen of Mr. Taylor of Norwich, whose admirable versions of Lenore, and of the Iphigenia in Tauris, have placed him at the head of all translators from that language.

THE STAGE.

Hard is his lot, who here by fortune plac'd,
Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste;
With every meteor of caprice must play,
And chase the new blown bubbles of the day.

PRELIMINARY.

WHATEVER importance may generally have been attached to criticisms on dramatical performances, it is certain that the interest which such compositions excite, is not only lively in itself, but, from its reference to local circumstances and characters is increased almost in proportion to the personality with which it is attended. The conductors of the Theatrical Department in the ORDEAL, while they do not feel themselves bound under any restraint in speaking of the exhibitions of the stage, do certainly consider those remarks which attach to players in general to be nugatory in their effects, unless they are caused by uncommon merit, or dictated by peculiar circumstances of demerit, in the performer. The common player is either incorrigible from dulness, dead to ambition from severity of censure, or incapable of a correct personation of character by reason of the innumerable difficulties he is obliged to encounter from rivalship of parts

in other performers, managerial intolerance, or limitation of time necessary to acquire a competent recollection of his author. Such arguments lose their force, however, when referred to *eminent* actors, and have no weight whatever, when the plays and not the players are the subjects of investigation. Accordingly our remarks will be directed to the apparent taste of the publick, and the merits of the compositions rather than to the defects of men and women, whose secondary intellects and capricousness of passion would reduce the dignity of criticism to the clamorous ebullitions of frivolous garrulity.

BOSTON THEATRE.

AMONG those plays which most unequivocally demand the process of *analysis*, those which are native, and born in the country, though in themselves unimportant compositions, should most decidedly receive the earliest attention. Nothing of this nature had occurred during the whole of the present season, until THE PILGRIMS, made its appearance a few weeks ago. But before we enter minutely into the discussion of its particular merits, it is necessary to make some few remarks on the nature of that theatrical mania, or *passion for the monstrous*, by which the present age of the English theatre is so disgracefully distinguished. The French theatre has had the merit within the last ten years of introducing the *melo-drama*, or a union of pantomime and dialogue, as the English theatre had about a century and a half ago, of beginning the more natural entertainment of tragi-comedy. The English, however, have adopted the melo-drama in its fullest latitude, and they have not only translated all the French and German compositions of any celebrity; but have preposterously turned their own tragedies as well as story-books and novels into works of the same heterogeneous texture.

If there are to be no disputes about propriety of taste, we must give up all pretensions to assert the necessity of truth and good sense in our amusements. But if there is such a thing as taste inhering in the human mind, we can only account for the permission of the *melo-drama* on the stage, on some such principles as should lead a white man to prefer for his companion the sable beauty of the coast of Africa, to the American female, glowing with healthfulness and youth, and filled with

"The bloom of young desire and purple light of love."

That taste has an existence, however, and is governed by some rules, is only denied by a few visionary minds; and in that particular branch of the subject, which implies the power of discrimination in the fine arts and associate feelings, it exists more evidently than in any other. It is here that *good sense* is the principal requisite in the formation of a

good taste, and though there may be disputes as to the becoming appearance of long waists or naked elbows, there is no doubt that Dryden was a fine poet, and Lord Chatham an eloquent statesman. But this desire for the *monstrous* is a crime against all reason, sense and propriety in nature. Tell a woman at this day that a wide hooped petticoat, or an extreme long waist, would much improve her exterior, and she would laugh in your face; yet these absurd fashions, were formerly universal, and had enthusiastick admirers. But the *melo-drama*, confounding all propriety in confusion, and nature in absurdity, can have no defence even in the moment of its full career. Palpably deviating from the only principles of taste which are supposed to have any governing influence on the mind, people of understandings the most obtuse as well as those of refined intellect, acknowledge the absurdity; and yet persevere in encouraging it. We shall improve another occasion to scout the *monster* from our stage, and to endeavour to unite all persons in one general exclamation against such preposterous violations of genuine good sense, and such dangerous attempts absolutely to pervert the taste of the community.

With this opinion of the *melo-drama* in general, it cannot be expected that we should view "The Pilgrims" with very favourable sentiments, however successfully it might have been composed, under the operation of the principles which govern such compositions. "The Pilgrims," however, is not entitled to *respect* from any consideration; though from its disgracing one of the most shining events which adorns our national annals it demands the most decided reprehension. It is a composition singularly absurd; it has neither conformity of character to historical fact, truth of relation, propriety of incident, nor interest of fable, to recommend it. We are sensible that this summary condemnation can be pronounced by any critick, however ignorant, on any play however meritorious, and therefore is entitled to no consideration unless it be supported by proof. While therefore we confess we have a strong partiality to the story, on which this *mis-called drama* is founded, we will proceed to account for the contempt which it has produced in our minds.

The fable is shortly this. First, Winslow and Juliana are desperately in love with each other, and two servants among the pilgrims are equally enamoured of *her*. In this state of things the landing of our forefathers takes place, which only involves a few aberrations from history, such as their discovering the natives immediately on their landing, which did not occur until three months afterwards, and the confusion occasioned by confounding the real character of Samoset in Squanto. After the landing, Watson, one of the servants, makes a most impudent declaration of his affection to Juliana, telling her that though he was her inferior in England, in the wilds of America he is her equal,

She resists, he presses, she screams, and in comes the rival servant Grafton, to her rescue. They fight, she escapes, and immediately Governour Carver seizes them, arrests their deadly revenge, gives them a sermon on duelling, and orders them to be tied back to back for their offence. In the mean time, Samoset, an Indian Chief, falls into a violent passion for this same Juliana, and as she is one day, probably in *the month of January*, taking a walk in *the woods* for a prospect, she finds one all *mildness and serenity, clearness and extent*. Here this impertinent Samoset interrupts her soliloquy and attempts to carry her off, and though he is opposed by Winslow, (who happened to be on a shooting frolick that morning, and came in the way at the very moment) he very nearly effects his design; but is fortunately prevented from accomplishing his wicked purposes by the very timely interposition of king Massasoit; who severely reprimands the Indian lover for his treachery, and dismisses him with a severe lecture on illicit attachment. The king and Juliana now go in quest of Winslow, who is missing after his fight with Samoset. It is not a little surprising that Juliana never told the king of the battle Winslow had with the Indian traitor, and should suffer him to get off so easily; however a circumstance still more surprising follows upon the heels of this first surprising emotion. Juliana and the king come across another *Birnam wood*, denominated an Indian ambush. For what purpose an ambush is laid we are not informed, nor can we readily imagine; the Indians were avowedly friendly to the pilgrims, and no war took place in Plymouth until many years after the landing. But so it is, they met with an ambush, and after the king carried his soldiers through their *manual exercise of trees*, Juliana and himself hide themselves behind the bushes; which is the most singular way of finding out a person who was missing that we believe was ever exhibited on any stage. Winslow however very opportunely comes by at this moment; the moving grove surrounds him, frightens him out of his wits, and then out bolts the king and his mistress, for the purpose probably of producing a decided contrast in his feelings, for stage effect. The lovers are afterwards united by Governour Carver, who officiates as priest, and they form the first couple, which were ever married in New England.

Having brought this story to a conclusion, let us see if there is any other to relate. Though there is none which has any connection with the last, yet there are many more in the piece. First of all, an Irishman and an Indian squaw, are in love with each other, then an Indian chief, a relation of king Massasoit, is restored to him, by means of Governour Carver, in a most surprising manner.

Besides all this, we are treated with a feast of shells, where no part of the fable is promoted, and where a witty Indian eats the inside of an oyster and presents the shell to a pilgrim; and after which Govern-

our Carver talks to the Indians as if they were courtiers in a ball room, and they answer him as if they were perfectly well acquainted with the arts and sciences in civilized life. The pilgrims speak of the falls of Niagara, before they could have been known; and *Massasoit* talks of weighing the *islander's* observations in the *balance of justice* before he had seen a pair of scales, or could understand there was such distinction in language as justice and injustice. In conclusion, the natives and the pilgrims assemble in one place, to see the wedding, it is presumed, of Winslow and Juliana. When lo! the goddess of liberty appears in a cloud, which descends gradually upon the stage; but neither the descent nor the appearance of the goddess excites any surprise. Quite the contrary; she must have been an intimate acquaintance of the pilgrims, for the governour walks up to the cloud, with a very polite and gentlemanly deportment, hands her goddess-ship out, and conducts her to the front of the stage. Here she makes a long harangue, and illustrates her observations in 1620, by allusions to events (with which she must have supposed her hearers to have been acquainted) which took place in 1807; and after telling them how great, powerful, and wise their descendants were likely to be, she is conducted back to her cloud in the same order as before; and then a marriage dance on the beach or in the woods concludes the entertainment.

It will appear from this representation that the composition in question is a compound of incongruous episodes; that none of them are connected; that the dialogue is absurd, the characters not preserved, and the serious incidents laughably ridiculous. Yet we cannot dismiss the subject without observing, that the period of the landing of our forefathers at Plymouth, embraces more circumstances of domestic vicissitude and national importance, calculated to form a serious drama, than almost any historical epoch of which we have an account. An event however which is not yet sufficiently darkened by the veil of time to warrant any deviations from fact, in the dramatick relation; but one which every lover of his country must wish should be commemorated by some writer who could do justice to the subject; who could portray with liveliness the perils of the unknown ocean, which washed the shore of Plymouth, and the numerous other difficulties which the pilgrims encountered; and who should be able, with a pen like Virgil's, to rescue the names of Winslow, Carver, and Bradford, the founders of his country, from the musty records of primitive times.